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ABSTRACT

This conference paper presents the "ethnic matrix," a theoretical model of the process of ethnicity which describes how ethnic identity is sustained or diminished in the life of an individual or ethnic group. After a general introduction, the first of the paper's three major sections presents a research review and overview of historical and societal perspectives of ethnic identity. It argues that, as a response to the cultural preservation revolution of blacks and Hispanic Americans of the 1960's, social scientists attempted to become more sensitive to the complexities of culture. Yet much remains to be understood about the form and function of the acculturation and assimilation process: it can no longer be simply assumed that individuals within a particular ethnic group will ultimately move from immigrant to assimilated Americans. The paper's second section presents the ethnic matrix model. A continuum is said to exist between two opposite poles: complete maintenance and complete assimilation. The individual fluctuates between these poles, and an individual's ethnic orientation is ultimately defined by daily choices, not by a fixed ethnic identity. The final section describes the nature of ethnic choices, and introduces a vertical component to the model, the intensity of the choice's impact on identity. The paper concludes by discussing some of the implications of the model for the social sciences. (KH)

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Conference Presentation: ETHNIC IDENTITY- VISIONS AND REVISIONS. First Eastern Regional Meeting of the National Association for Ethnic Studies. Pace University New York, Friday, October 25, 1985.

Title: The Ethnic Matrix: A Psycho-Social Perspective, and its Implications for Human Service Practitioners.

This paper is part of a larger monograph in which I analyze ethnic identity from a variety of perspectives. Each perspective, however, links the phenomenon of ethnic identity to problems, practices, and policies related to the field of human services. Most of the theoretical concepts presented in this piece are directly related to counseling psychology and education, although other practitioners providing a social or health service in a culturally diverse setting should find this paper applicable to their work. Most human services practitioners at one time or another must confront cultural issues which in some way mediate their role as helping professionals. All of us are in many ways confronted with

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cross-cultural issues in our daily lives. And while the America of the 80's has adopted a language which reflects urbane ethnic diversity and awareness, the traditional zenophobia and home grown ethno-racial stereotypes are still very much intact and rooted in the American cultural consciousness. The core of our racial and ethnic images, fantasies, and behavior on the whole have remained unaltered by the ethnic awakenings of the 60's and 70's.

The two areas which are part of the larger monograph, but which will not be discussed here include (1) a critique of the traditional social science methodology used to collect and analyze ethnic data in American society, and (2) implications for training cross-cultural counselors, educators, and other human service practitioners. I mention this, because throughout this paper I make reference to problems in social scientific methodology and implications for the professional training programs. This paper will present two aspects of ethnicty which must be examined in tandem, especially if we want to begin to understand ethnic identity as a highlty complex and dynamic pehnomenon- A phenomenon replete with social, cultural, political and intensely personal psychological issues and experiences.

First, no discussion about ethnicity or ethnic identity can be considered complete without placing our analytical paradigm within a broader sociological and historical context. Ethnic

identity, by definition includes the domains of self and self within the larger community. The development of effective cross-cultural counseling methods requires that the practitioner become conversant with the full range of psychological, social, economic, political and cultural variables which have a direct impact on the self: the practioner's as well as the client's self.

Too often the theoretical social scientist has been restricted by allowing the methodology or the particular academic discipline to dictate the focus of analysis. Similarly, the practitioner engaged in providing some kind of human or social service has limited his/her understanding of the broader issues because the focus and concern of the worker has been narrowly reduced to the specific needs and concerns of the individual or family in question. Barriers or obstacles which stand in the way of our fully understanding ethnic identity or any other human phenomenon in our society are by in large artifacts which grow out of the limitations of our self imposed theoretical constructs and ways of measuring or observing the human experience.

Second, I will present a theoretical model which I've labeled the ethnic matrix. More than a model, it is a way which suggests how one can look at the process of ethnicity from a variety of perspectives without necessarily locking oneself into a fixed set of delineated categories or typologies which generally tend to

present the ethnic process a static event. The ethnic matrix describes how ethnic identity is sustained, challenged, diminished or enhanced in the life of the individual or the ethnic group within the larger community. As suggested, this model also has clear implications for training human services practitioners. But beyond this, the ethnic matrix may help deepen, refine and more fully clarify the nature of this complex social and psychological process. Much too much in this area of inquiry has given way to the cliche, bordering on the chauvenistic or reactionary. Part of this has grown out of the political and economic shifts and realignments that have accompanied the assertion of our diverse ethnic communities. Abstract theoretical constructs have been used to promote a particular sector's political and social interests and of necessity postpone or restrict the advances of another.

One additional note, because a good deal of my own research, teaching, and counseling work has focused on the Puerto Rican and other Hispanic groups, many examples in this paper are drawn from that experience so that I might illustrate how the ethnic matrix model works. More recently, however, my work has allowed me to apply some of these conceptual notions to non-Hispanic groups as well. This same analytical model can be applied to other ethnic groups also struggling with the meanings and implications of identity, assimilation and acculturation in American society.

Historical and Societal Perspectives of Ethnic Identity

It has become increasingly clear, with few exceptions, that those caught betwen two cultural worlds share more or less a common core of psycho-social crises, conflicts, uncertainties as well as a healthy amount of tenacity and determination to sustain identity as they move through their lives in contemporary American society. One dynamic that is often neglected in our writing and research about ethnic identity is in the formulation of how the larger societal context shapes, directs, and influences our intellectual agendas as well as how it affects the subjects of our projected intellectual or social scientific curiosity.

It is suggested that the 60's and early 1970's not only provided the climate for a profound challenge of our institutions, but this period also provided the impetus for psychologists and educators and other human services workers to radically alter their perceptions of themselves as well as their perceptions of their clients, patients and students. And at the same time that this was taking place, the consumers(or subjects of our studies) of our services were also being profoundly radicalized by this same social movement(Vazquez,1976). What I would like to address first is this societal context and to show how our work was directly and indirectly affected by what was going on politically and socially, and how our various agendas in

social science research and practice today are a direct legacy of that period.

While the strength and over-powering attraction of the American life style and the "American dream" have created almost impossible odds against continuity and maintenance of most culturally distinct groups in contemporary society, it cannot be denied that the civil rights struggles of the 60's gave birth to a movement which was eventually to develop into a broad based cultural preservation revolution. The black-American, by identifying himself as Black and not Negro, launched the movement towards ethnic pride and maintenance of cultural heritage and positive self-identification. Naturally, many of us in psychology, counseling and education were directly affected by these public and private declarations concerning issues of race, ethnicity, class, culture and language. In effect, our work as scholars and practitioners began to reflect many of the challenges hurled at the establishement by a disenfranchised community.

In essence, there was a very real need expressed by minorities and other disenfranchised segments of our society; a need that grew out of anger and a lack of power or control over their immediate environments and institutions. And when the need was articulated for more Chicano, Native American, Afro-American, Black and Puerto Rican professionals, many in the professional

world- black, Anglo, Hispanic and Native American began to listen. Our collective response to this need over the years transformed, re-directed, and re-shaped curriculum in professional training programs, introduced ethnic studies programs, advanced pedagogical theory and practice in bilingual education and in general we have attempted to make our professional human service practitioners more sensitive to the complexities of culture in the counseling process. We should not overlook the very direct societal connections between the communities we seek to serve in our work, and those who provide the service. If we keep these connections clear and upper-most in our minds, then our professional agendas as researchers and practitioners will no doubt continue to have some direct meaning.

While much has been written on the subject of ethnicity in American society, little is actually understood about its form, function and the underlying dynamics of the acculturation and assimilation process. It has been widely accepted that acculturation is part of the ultimate process of assimilation. Ethnics in America " have become acculturated, though not assimilated," as pointed out by Andrew Greely(1969,p69). Greely, Milton Gordon and others, support the concept that acculturation is indeed a sub-process in the larger process of assimilation. Assimilation, as described by Gordon(1964)in his earlier work and again in his most recent book(1978), puts forth a paradigm that

has come to represent a classical model of the phenomenon of ethnicity and the assimilation process in American life.

A close inspection of Gordon's assimilation variables and the paradigm presented (pp.71 & 76) reveals a theoretical construct that is fundamentally static in form and substance. The reader is left with the impression that if a specific ethnic group "successfully" checks off all the sub-types of assimilation than it can be said that this particular group has indeed assimilated into the American core society. In effect, his paradigm suggests that the non-ethnically identifiable individual will be a likely candidate for the ultimate and inevitable form of assimilation: structural assimilation. Theoretically, he posits that the person must divest himself of his cultrual garb, both intrinsic and extrinsic traits or characteristics, before he can be wholly assimilated into the core society. The facts, however, seem to suggest that this end-point in the acculturation process is:(1) rare enough to be considered mythical and (2) that white, Anglo or European ethnicity in America should be viewed as a significant variant of the ethnic phenomoneon experienced by racial minorities(Chicano, black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian).

Gordon mistakenly presents the example of the emerging black middle class as prima facia evidence that blacks have only been 'delayed' in their eventual assimilation as a result of 300 years

of discrimination. This is not delayed assimilation, this is simply the rule that demonstrates that the assimilatioon sub-processes, as he suggests, are not really part of an inevitable move towards sturctural assimilation-at least not for the Black American. The Native American, the Chicano and Puerto Ricans are yet other exceptions. Social, economic and racial factors prevent these groups from moving as easily as their white ethnic counterparts. Most recently, a study in New York State revealed that Hispanics continue to be " poorer, less educated and more prone to serious health and social problems than any other segment of the population, white or black...."(New York Times, p.1). Furthermore, Puerto Ricans, the oldest Hispanic migrants in the Northeast representing at least 60%of the Hispanic population, tended to lag behind in almost every index. According to Gordon's analysis one would've expected the oldest settlement of Hispanics to be the most assimilated.

Gordon also presents class as a necessary correlate or variable of the assimilation process. And indeed ethclass, as he puts it, is a most important factor in our analysis of ethnicity. It must be recognized, however, that the black middle class is indeed very different, and will continue to distinguish itself from the white ethnic middle class in America, as will be the case in the emerging middle-class Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American and Asian American. And, certainly as has been the case in the Jewish community as so clearly demonstrated by Erick Rosenthal in his

study of Chicago's Jewish community(1960). Rosenthal points out that while class mobility contributes to a change in residential patterns, it can be demonstrated that in this particular case there is a voluntary segregation and an attempt to restore ethnicity through modest forms of Jewish education. The recent resurgence on the part of both secular and religious groups to maintain Jewish traditions and beliefs is further evidence of the persistence of ethnic identity in the America of the 80's. Young Jewish parents, for example, have recently re-established Yiddish language schools in New York City to carry on what is believed to be a most important part of Jewish history, culture, and identity. Class mobility does not seem to be a necessary correlate or precursor to structural assimilation. Changing social climates now may make it easier for some ethnic groups to move up economically; however, cultural encapsulation sometimes becomes a by-product of that same economic mobility.

Why then must we persist in using a model that assigns a fixed identity to a group or a individual member of a particular ethnic group? My sense is that we must begin to look at the phenomenon from a new perspective. There are too many new issues which have emerged recently which have disturbed the uni-dimensional or static model traditionally used for understanding and analyzing ethnicity in contemporary American society. There are new relationships and new patterns that must be linked to the many levels of the ethnic process before we can fully understand how

it interacts with other processes in American society.

The wide spread emergence of an ethno-political and socio-cultural consciousness has had a significant impact on the old perception which describes a steady movement from immigrant to the assimilated American. Again, this new ethnic consciousness or the so-called "new-ethnicity," as it has come to be known, assumes a different degree and intensity of conscious commitment for the two categories of ethnics. In other words, today people know consciously that their membership in that particular ethnic group brings with it complex set of social, psycholgical, political , and cultural realities. And with this heightened awareness, there is a sense that there are choices that one could make about ones ethnicity. Twenty years ago there wasn't this awareness, so consequently the choices made about one's ethnic identity were limited and quite private.

First, the minorities, those ethnic groups that are usually perceived and perceive themselves as "people of color" in the United States, have taken on the call to ethnic revival with a marked urgency. It is not so much that Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics see themselves as non-white in a racial sense, it is that they have a self descriptive perception which places them in a non-Anglo category. This non-Anglo category carries with it an ethno-racial interpretation. For example, one which allows a phenotypically, "white" Puerto Rican or other Hispanic to

describe or refer to an Italian, a Jew or a Slavic American as white. This must be understood within the context of this perceived non-white category which has much more to do with ethnicity or culture than with a traditional means used for determining racial designation. This ethnically expressed sense of self, coupled with racial descriptors is a significant one, and one that is often misinterpreted by observers outside of the groups. This ethno-racial identification is particularly important as specific ethnic groups begin to establish their own agendas for social, political and cultural cohesion.

Since racism is still very much a part of the fabric of the social structure of this society, and since the old ethnic racial minorities(blacks, Native American, Chicanos, Asians, and Puerto Ricans) are still suffering from the same social and economic ills, it becomes critically important for the student of ethnicity to understand that there are two distinct streams of ethnic revivalism in America. These streams at times are quite parallel, and at other times cross each other and form a common river bed. There are times, however, when they diverge and run entirely different courses.

The second stream of ethnic now participating fully and competing for a rather perplexing kind of ethnic equality through the new ethnicity is the category of the white ethnic. The interpreters of the new ethnicity challenged the notion of

"legitimate" and "illegitimate" minorities(Novak, 1977,p.8). They argued that the Southern and Eastern European have as much right to preserve and maintain their own cultural heritage and ethnic connections as the non-white ethnics. Interestingly, the issue of discrimination and racism once perceived by the racial minorities to have been in part perpetrated and perpetuated by the economically mobile white ethnics, now begins to get hazy and vague.

What was once experienced as a clear line between whites and ethnic racial minorioties has become somewhat blurred. The factors of race, class and ethnicity as significant barriers in the struggle for economic and social equality have now entered a kind of limbo or gray zone. If, for example, the Irish-American Catholics are victimized ethnically, then who is doing the victimizing? Similarly, if the Jews and Italians are registering complaints of discrimination, then who is doing the discriminating? The new ethnicity has introduced some confounding variables into an already complex web of ethnic and race relations. These confused perceptions are most apparent in the claims and counter-claims surrounding affirmative action policies.

The blacks, Native American, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Asians in America have always recognized that their ethnic and racial differences have always been a significant factor in the expected

quality of life or indeed their chances for surivival in American society. Historically, these differences have set them apart and, these same differences have traditionally served as a means to conveniently separate the "haves" from the "have nots." And as a result of being set apart socially, economically and residentially into ghettos, tribal reservations, barrios, they have in large measure, maintained or held on to their culture and language. Perhaps in a somehwat inverted fashion, the social isolation and setting off into ghettos has served to preserve whatever has survived of the language and traditions. The exact degree of loss or retention of language and culture varies greatly from group to group.

The racial minorities seeking to reify their cultural experience, find that this process is intimately tied to issues of survival on an economic, social, political and psychological level. On the other hand, the Anglo-or the one who is perceived as socially white in American society-can and does enter the dominant society with greater ease. This does not to mean, however, that the Irish or Italian-Americans do not face varied forms of discrimination. They most certainly do. However, their ability to disconnect and enter the mainstream American society is greatly facilitated by their percieved racial identity. This ethnic disassociation, while sometimes superficial, sometimes facile, often painful and disorienting, unfortunately creates the kind of psychological stress and confusion that leads many to

assume a marginal social identity. Ethnotherapy or traditional psychotherapy with a concentrated focus on issues of culture, now allows many the opportunity to understand the profound impact of culture on the psychological development of the individual in this society. This kind of focus also serves to clarify the interconnections between social rejection, ethnicity, interpersonal and intergenerational conflict (See McGoldrick, Pearce, and Giordano,Ethnicity and Family Therapy, 1982).

Conscious articulation and recognition of cultural maintenance as a desired goal will inevitably alter the classic movement towards eventual assimilation. The forces underlying the desire to retain group cohesion for political, cultural, social, economic or psychological reasons, will retard and sometimes reverse the assimilation process. White ethnics who explore their conflicts in an ethnic oriented therapy will begin to develop a greater sense of self in connection with their cultural values, beliefs, traditions and ceremonies or rituals. They will, no doubt, be more open to accept or re-kindle their cultural beliefs. This dynamic may differ somewhat for the racial minority who, with few exceptions, have never been able to separate themselves from membership in a group that has been socially marginated, because of culture and racial identity.

In an effort to assert itself ethnically, the white-ethnic community seems to have gone directly to the heart of those

concerns formerly within the exclusive domain of the non-white ethnic communities. Now, however, as the "new ethnicity" emerges and takes root in our institutions and in our social consciousness, the white ethnic continues to lay claim to these minority demands. And along with these, there is an insistance upon a variety of economic and social reparations. What we see in the 80's is the presence of white ethnic studies programs in the university alongside minority ethnic studies programs, and an affirmative action program that has lengthened its list of aggrieved parties. As a matter of course, the notion of cultural pluralism which on the surface seems to be far more acceptable than the melting pot concept, has been used to defuse the demands and concerns of the minorities in the university. Without going into further detail regarding this phenomenon, the dyfunctional use of the cultural pluralism concept was discussed in a conference paper delivered Josephine Nieves at the First International Conference for Puerto Rican Studies(Canino, Gorelick, Nieves, Ortiz, Rodriguez, and Vazquez, 1981)

I have detailed as much of the public debate as possible so that we can begin to appreciate the complexities that have surfaced around ethnicity in American society in the last few decades. We should recognize that there are indeed two distinct threads of the larger more global form of ethnic revivalism and acknowledge points of conflict and commmonality when present. As I suggested earlier, the public debate has eventually transfomed

itself through those who make policy in the public domain: educators have introduced new curriculum offerings; social service agencies have re-vamped their programs and personnel practices; legislators have written new laws and funded new programs. And of course those who are called upon to produce social science research to support or challenge the proposed changes in our public intitutions are also participants in this public debate.

When the country locked itself into a debate which placed ethnicity and racial factors at the center of social conflict, the traditional ways of studying these processes were never significantly altered. Instead, we continued to assume a static methodology in pursuit of new data. The complexities that usually accompany the acculturation process were further complicated by the fact that all of the participants were now quite conscious of what the social and political consequences of this debate might be for each of them. What continues to distress me is that we in the social science community are almost as befuddled as those we hope to instruct and enlighten.

While not declaring interest in ethnicity as un-American, Nathan Glazer,in one of his many commentaries, expressed a strong assimilationist sentiment when he pointed to government supported bilingual education programs as an example of government having the power to distort the "development of common nationality and

culture."(January,1980). Glazer states emphatically that:

> "Ethnicity is a reality, and one has to be aware of it, conscious of it and, in a sense, sympathetic to it. But I see no reason to encourage it(p.63)."

What indeed is the "common nationality" and "culture" he recommends that we all adopt? And, furthermore, is this common cultural core acceptable or even accessible to Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Chicanos as well as other Eastern and Southern European ethnics? It seems that Glazer, in this instance, may be a spokesperson for the assimilationist perspective. And what do we do in our work as cross-cultural educators, therapists, and counselors,'encourage it,'; or as Glazer suggests, are we simply going to be 'sympathetic' to the question of ethnicity? It is evident from his commentary that assimilationist thinking is very much alive and well in the academic community.

A more recent example of this kind of thinking has been expressed by Richard Rodriguez, through his paradigm of the public and private society of language and culture. Rodriguez voices the concern of many of the anti-bilingualists, yet at the same time offers pedagogical pronouncements which were accepted as gospel by the educational establishment. Rodriguez' evocative account of his childhood through a most eloquent rememberance of the complexities of language and a conflicted cultural identity, serves as a kind of spokesperson for those staunchly opposed to

bilingual education. Here was a credentialed Chicano, an articulate university professor from a poor background who finally expressed strong anti-bilingual education sentiments. How could the press, and the opposition miss this opportunity?

Rodriguez, not unlike Glazer, fails to understand the true nature of the ethnic struggle in America. Each sets up a straw man as a foil for their polemic, and in doing so attributes agendas, definitions and ideological views that seem to be far off the mark. What they say bilingual educators or proponents of the new ethnicity want is not what I recognize as something I have run accross on the agendas of my colleagues in cross-cultural, bilingual education or ethnic studies programs. Their arguements seem to pander to an underlying hysteria which reflects a fear and distrust of the consequences of the public support of language diversity, ethnic empowerment, educational democracy and meaningful ethnic community.

These arguements are only a few examples of the essence of an intellectual struggle and the heated climate surrounding the public debate about language and culture. The debate itself is really about political power, class re-allignments, and racial and cultural hegemony in American society. Ultimately, the public society that Rodriguez claims to have finally accepted as his very own is only another group's ethnic core. That is all it is and nothing more: somebody else's extrinsic and intrinsic set

of values and beliefs. And where indeed are the so-called "middle-class ethnics" exhorted by Rodriguez as "filled with decadent self-pity"? I don't know who they are frankly. The people I do see and read are those deeply concerned with the obstacles created by language, culture and race in our public society. These individuals seem determined to correct the imbalances in educational achievement, employment, health, housing and quality of life.

Knowing or at least beginning to understand the nature of the ethnic process and experience will enable us to recognize and identify the excesses of chauvenism on either end of the assimilationist continuum. The following section examines ethnicity and ethnic identity phenomenologically in an effort to focus on the actual nature and meaning of the ethnic experience as it unfolds in contemporary society.

ETHNICITY AS A DYNAMIC PHENOMENON- THE ETHNIC MATRIX.

While we can all recognize the value of understanding the types of assimilation in the matter of ethnicity, it alone cannot provide a sufficiently dynamic conceptualization for what actually occurs to a member of an ethnic group as he or she moves through all the sub-processes of assimilation. Generally, it is suggested that the individual and group moves from a traditional point of reference-identity or orientation- to an anglo-American point of reference, and theoretically, ultimately onto

assimilation: an inevitable uni-directional process. However, if one were to consider these varying degrees of assimilation as points on opposite poles of a continuum, and the movements towards or away from either pole as an ebb and flow process, then we would begin to envision an added dimension in the acculturative process (See Table 1, page 38). This process is characterized by a time and movement dimension whose shifts or changes are determined by a highly complex set of social interactions producing a larger web or ethnic matrix finding experession in individual and group behavior. This movement, this ebb and flow, is largely determined by pieces of behavior experienced by each member of the ethnic group, and collectively on a broader societal scale will be seen as patterns or culture shifts taking place in the group itself.

The ethnic behavioral patterns can be viewed as choices,-some forced, others voluntary- and decisions or perferences expressed or acted upon in the course of a lifetime, a year, a month or a day. These discrete choices or preferences will move the individual to either one end of that continuum or the other(See Table 1). In so doing, the choice or posture assumed in response to a particular event or activity will either support his groups traditional mode of culturally determined behavior or it(the choice) will support a preference for an anglo-American oriented pattern. The choice, on the other hand, may be one which represents an acceptable modification or a mixed mode expressive

of a blending of the two cultural behaviors. These ethnic choice points are legion. Some examples may include the following: choice of residential neighborhood; choice of spouse; naming of a child; foods eaten; music we listen to: ritual celebration; use of mother tongue; involvement in ethnic politics; and so on.

I hypothesize that the daily individual choices ultimately defines for that individual his ethnic orientation rather than that which was formerly presented or perceived as a fixed ethnic identity. In effect, the components or elements are in constant flux and have the potential for a directional change. Yet the overall movement or orientation does allow for the development of broader patterns of behavior. Viewing ethnicity as a dynamic and changeable phenomenon on a continuum expressive of preferences pushing us towards or away from either mode, allows us a greater degree of flexibility and refinement in developing an understanding of the ethnic process. In effect, ethnicity is as complex as the myriad decisions that define it as a portion of human behavior. It is no wonder that our attempts at measuring ethnic identity, ethnicity, etc., have proven to be such a difficult and less than valid and reliable process. Our abstractions of what we believe it to be is in large measure determined by our abstracted methodologies.

If we consider the ethnic continuum once again, we have before us a visual model for what may be occurring in the acculturation

and assimilation process. The modes, while existing only in the ideal type(abstract) sense, do provide polar opposites which allow us the opportunity to envision movement towards or away either end of the continuum. This phenomenon is experienced most profoundly by first and second generation immigrants and continues to be part of the psycho-cultural process as long as that particular group is considered "different" in this society. Ethnics perceived as phenotypically "white", tend to move much more quickly towards an assimilative mode than those ethnics perceived as "non-white". Obviously, the black-American for example, continues to be keenly aware of his/her differences. In daily life choices he is caught between the Afro-American mode, and the assimilated mode of one who may choose total denial of race and cultural heritage. And of course, this also holds true for those minorities who, because of their social economic conditions, are forced to adhere closely to their traditional modes of behavior in isolated communities.

The large scale rejection by the dominant society, not only as a result of racial distinction but also because of other indicators of ethnic difference, reinforces the ethnic group"s sense of peoplehood. However, this kind of negative reinforcement of ethnicity is not always experienced as an affirmation of the group's positive traditional patterns of behavior. The message received and often internalized is that they are different, and clearly inferior to the members of the

dominant group; their language and culture are not worth maintaining; and in order to become "real" Americans they must abandon their traditional cultural patterns. This resounding message comes through loud and clear in every aspect of their lives.

The most pervasive and profound form of cultural repression comes from our schools. The educational institution is there to socialize and to Americanize the culturally different child. Although we see and hear much about the need for "global" education, the controversy still rages around the efficacy of bilingual programs. These efforts are only representative of a very small slice of our educational agenda. And certainly, in the history of education in this country, the thrust has been in favor of a pedagogical philosophy that is not in the business of preserving culture. What I am suggesting here- lest we become complacent and lulled into believing that our educational institutions are now open to cultural differences- is that we must look more closely at those programs which on the surface seem to be radicalizing our institutions. What may be occurring, under the guise of cultural pluralism and multi-cultural education, is the same old brand of Americanization.

The message from our schools, the media and other sectors of our society is persistent: language, culture and traditions must yield in order to gain full and direct admission into the larger

society. We must melt the "unmeltables;" the price of admission is your ethnic identity; who you think you are must be abandoned, given up, discarded; your sense of cultural continuity must be terminated. What remains of our strong rich cultures sometimes is only evident in the vestigial pap of annual traditions so commonly expressed in the American ethnic parade. How then is the cultural discontinuity accomplished in our society? How does one acculturate, but never fully assimilate? What is the nature of the acculturative process for the individual and for his group?

As suggested above, I believe that this process occurs simply and unceremoniously. It is a process that goes on continuously and methodically. We participate consciously and knowingly at times, but fail to grasp its' significance unless we absorb or fully understand the ultimate end-point in that process. And that end-point is simply the end of a culture, the dissolution of a tradition, a way of life and a language. The open public debate on ethnicity, the raised consciousness in American society, and the movement to empower the local community are only a few of the socio-cultural factors that have reversed or at least slowed down the inevitability of the assimilation process. Although most people are still confused about what constitutes culture, questions about language and culture are receiving greater and greater attention from lay public as well as from the professional community. The dialogue which was ignited during

the 60's continues to have an impact on our communities and our public agencies.

The flow and direction of our lives is guided by countless numbers of choices. At times simple, and at other times quite complex, these choices as they are made cause significant shifts or re-orientation in our life patterns. Recognizing the complexity of many of our lives, our daily choices, while quite numerous, do take on a certain regualrity and predictability. A significant number of our life choices contain ethnic elements or components. In effect, during the course of our lives we are faced continuously with certain choices which involve a facet or an aspect of our ethnicity: our ethnic selves. Naturally, this ethnic self is functionally inseparable from other aspects of our psycho-social selves. These ethnic choices operate on many levels and carry with them varying degrees of psychological and social meaning and consequences. At times, these choices may be quite mundane, routine, and of little consequence. And, at other times, the choice may produce a deeply significant impact on our ethnicity and ultimately result in a push towards an acculturative life pattern. These choices, whether petty or profound, go onto build upon a lifetime of options which ultimately enhance our ethnic associations (psychologically and socially), or reduce ethnicity in a cumulative sense. New patterns come out of these choices, and these new patterns in turn create new sets of choices on the ethnic continuum.

NATURE OF CHOICE-SIMPLE TO COMPLEX

Naturally, one choice alone does not cause you to drop your membership in a particular ethnic group. But a long series of interconnected choice points will eventually have an impact on your sense of ethnic orientation. For example, I believe that Richard Rodriguez' observations are more than a commentary on the efficacy of bilingual education, but rather reflects an individual personal struggle with self and his community. Ultimately, the choices Rodriguez made moved him further and further away from one end of the ethnic continuum to the other , where he experienced his newly formed identity as his personal epiphany.

> "Thus it happened for me. Only when I was able to think of myself as an American, no longer alien in gringo society, could I seek the rights and opportunities necessary for full public individuality. The social and political advantages I enjoy as a man began on the day I came to believe that my name is indeed Rich-heard Road-ree-guess."(Rodriguez,p.18)

For Rodriguez, his revelation came with the acceptance of the anglecized sound of his name, for others it comes with an awareness and acceptance of who they are by asserting their ethnic identity in public society:"my name is Juan".

Unfortunately, the controversy surrounding Rodriguez' work focussed on his pedagogical preferences rather than on the internal individual struggle as representative of only one kind

of journey towards assimilation. Other ethnics who have found themselves in this same struggle have taken their private intimate world and thrust it into the public domain, and in so doing risked rejection and prejudice. Many, however, have met with an acceptance of who they were. If not by others, they accepted themselves for who and what they are with the same kind of equanimity expressed by Rodriguez.

Not only is this ethnic choice made between two poles on the continuum represented as a horizontal movement, but each choice also carries with it a degree of intensity which we could conceptualize as a vertical or hierarchical system denoting the degree of impact of that particular ethnic choice. The interaction between a vertical and a horizontal continuum forms the essence of the ethnic matrix. The ethnic matrix can then be defined as that point, one of many in an individual's life, where he or she moves towards or away from a traditional ethnic mode of behavior(horizontal) and at the same time this choice carries with it a property which can be seen as an intensity factor(vertical continuum). Matrix in this sense is defined as:

> ... a place or medium in which something is bred, produced or developed; or, a place or point of origin and growth"(O.E.D.)

What is the choice, and what is the intensity or impact of this choice on the individual's ethnic lifestyle?

First, as indicated above, some choices are simple and carry no

significant impact on the individual's degree of ethnicity. Second, we know that some choices mark significant points in the person's life where the movement away from the traditional mode is experienced as a critical departure from established cultural patterns or ethnic norms. This kind of shift is experienced as a cultural breach. Third, there are a host of choices that present a serious conflict in values and belief systems, but are not experienced on a conscious level. And as these remain unresolved or go unrecognized, they will continue to produce stress and some degree of psycho-social dysfunction for the individual. This dysfunctional effect can be seen as it manifests itself through the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse in many ethnic communities. Individuals are caught in flux, in transition, and face social and psychic oppression through a variety of contacts and confrontations with the dominant society. Others, however, re-direct this stress and conflict into artistic, social, political or literary forms of expression, and in so doing regain or re-affirm a more positive sense of self and community.

One of the fundamental purposes of cross-cultural counseling or co-ethnic counseling is to focus our attention on issues related to culture and cultural adaptation. And hopefully, in our work we will be able to use this understanding for the benefit of the individual and the family. Those who carry their culture pretty much intact, while making appropriate shifts in their approach to the new culture, are those who will experience the least amount

of conflict. Conversely, the individual or family experiencing the greatest degree of cultural dissonence and believing that their cultural matrix is entirely useless in these new surroundings, are the ones who will experience the greatest dysfunction and will need the kind of counseling and therapy that we are trying to develop.

Earlier studies by Fernandez-Marina, et.al. (1960) demonstrated that those college students in the University of Puerto Rico most in need of counseling were those who were beginning to disengage themselves from the traditional latin family belief system. They make the following point:

> "...our non-neurotics were significantly more accepting of traditional Latin-American family beliefs than were our neurotics. Apparently here in Puerto Rico those who are moving too rapidly away from the traditional family values of the society are encountering more inter-personal problems than those who are holding on to, or moving slowly from, traditional family beliefs." (p.244)

In effect, as we move along in our lives we continue to make both major and minor choices which move us towards one end of the ethnic continuum or the other. We must acknowledge the complexity of this ethnic matrix which accounts for a host of ethnic choices and decisions, both conscious and unconscious. Very little is known about the profound cohesive factors which bind certain ethnic groups. At the same time there is little known about those who find themselves in the throes of virtual cultural dissolution or absorption as marginal members in our

ethnically neutered American society.

In contrast then, does this mean that the traditional ethnic group can provide a centrality and sense of focus in the life of the individual? Or do we know too well that the powerfully attractive mass American culture lurks constantly in the shadows and competes with one's strong desire for identity in the ethnic community? A greater sense of ambivalence is much more evident and perhaps more stressful in the individual who actively seeks a greater degree of socio-economic mobility. In this same individual there may be a profound need for community or for centrality. But the cultural abyss, and the lure and the prizes offered by the mass culture all exist outside the gates of the ethnic community; and the acquisition of these seem to require the renunciation of membership in that primary group. Indeed, what more does this mass culture provide beyond the seeming material comfort and imagined status that comes with social mobility?

Once again, Rodriguez' words illustrate his personal leap into the public society and describes the loss of a certain kind of intimacy. He states that:

> " It is true that my public society today is often impersonal, in fact, my public society today is usually mass society. But despite the anonymity of the crowd, and despite the fact that the individuality I achieve in public is often tenuous- because it depends on my being one in a crowd- I celebrate the day I acquired my new name."(p.18)

The point here is not to focus on how far Rodriguez has assimilated into the mainstream core society, but to recognize this expereince for what it is: a point in a long series of events and choices he has made in his life. His personal journal is an excellent example of the ethnic process in flux as suggested in the ethnic matrix. The choices he made in his life, and those he continues to make, may move him further and further along the ethnic continuum towards the Anglo mode or they may move him back to the traditional Hispanic mode. Yet today he will remember the sounds of his Spanish childhood, and these, he said, were a part of the "golden age of (my) childhood."(p.17)

These are not only nastalgic recollections, but they reflect what he is and what he feels today. Psychologically, his approach to words, sounds, images and imaginings of intimacies of his heart are only a reflection of this process; and he will continue to call upon these memories and experiences and ways of looking at the world today as he writes or teaches. Rodriguez is far from the assimilated American. The Chicano child in him continues to shape the perception of his world.

While Rodriguez may have stepped into a pedagogical hornets nest about the uses of language and culture in the classroom, his most important contribution lies in his presentation of his thoughts and feelings as he moves through the shifts in ethnic identity. His account is an excellent case study of the ethnic

matrix at work. The complexity and subtlety of this phenomenon, how it works, how it is shaped and re-shaped over time and space is still very much a problem. The fact is that Rodriguez has not stopped making choices on the ethnic continuum. He has, most recently, to the chagrin of the Anglo-establishment press and others looking for his support, taken a public stand against the proposed constitutional amendment declaring English the official language of the United States. He states the following:

> "Our government has no business elevating one language above all others, no business implying the supremacy of Anglo culture."(Will, 1985, p.78)

Considering the ethnic matrix, on this particular choice Rodriguez finds himself moving towards the Hispanic end of the continuum. The point here is that the many options taken offer the potential for moving us towards or away from either end of the ethnic continuum.

Once the dynamic nature of ethnicity and ethnic identity is fully recognized, we can then begin to focus on the impact it may have on individual development and group interaction. It is a process that is difficult to grasp in the classic social scientific sense; one that requires a broad-spectrum analysis-an interdisciplinary approach, if you will. My belief is that the nature of ethnic identity itself sets up the kinds of obstacles that prevent the researcher from fully appreciating its every nuance.

This factor of course, has not discouraged researchers from approaching ethnicity with clear definitions and highly structured forms of measurement and data analysis. What we have seen is as varied in approach as there are investigators. The various approaches have in turn had some impact on education, psychology and other human services professions. You can define almost anything you want to measure, and once you've figured out how you can measure it then you can say just about anything about it you which. But it doesn't really tell you very much about what it means and about what it is.

Each area has developed its own set of strategies which are premised on some belief about what role ethnicity or ethnic identity plays in their own particular field. Although anthropologists for quite some time had been engaged in cross-cultural research and what the implications might be for human relations, it wasn't until the 1960's that psychologists interested in broadening their prespectives and effectiveness started to consider the role of culture in the counseling or psychotherapeutic process. Similarly, primary school curriculum and college courses were challenged and professional training programs were questioned, because the obvious absence of ethnic content seemed to limit the applicability of some of these concepts to a small sector of the population: white middle-class America.

Including more cultural content in curriculum, increasing the practitioner's awareness, and other changes in our strategy were not carried out in a socio-cultural vacuum. As indicated at the beginning of this article, there was so much going on in the larger society that it was difficult to keep abreast of the latest developments in this most volatile arena. Now that things seemed to have slowed down a bit, we may now begin to understand what advances, if any, have been made towards comprehending the ethnic process in American society. I've learned that those proposing the broader, less rigid definitions of what ethnic identity might be, are on the right track in terms of theory building in human and social behavior. Those, on the other hand, restricted to finite social questions within even more restrictive methodologies are too easily allowing themselves to get bogged down in amassing quantitative minutia. They seem to be perpetuating the empirical style which C.W. Mills described and cautioned us about as follows:

> "What all this amounts to is the use of statistics to illustrate general points and the use of general points to illustrate statistics. The general points are neither tested nor made specific. They are adapted to the figures, as the arrangements of the figures is adapted to them. The general points and explanations can be used with other figures too; and the figures can be used with other general points. The logical tricks are used to give apparent structural and historical and psychological meaning to studies which by their very style of abstraction have eliminated such meanings."(p.71)

I will not go as far as Mills to suggest that these studies and

approaches are totally devoid of meaning, but what does seem to happen frequently is that the central idea or thrust of the study is not made apparent. It is too often embedded or lost in the tables and charts abstracted from census tapes.

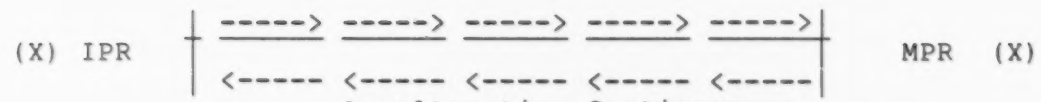
The essence of the ethnic experience always seems to be absent in most of these studies: the quality of time and space between individuals and groups is never fully captured or examined. Gegory Bateson, in discussing the problems of scientific measurement, suggested that "behavioral scientists are in the habit of looking for quantities, and so miss the patterns that really matter"(Goldman, 1978, p.47). It seems that in our zeal to count frequencies and determine validity and reliability, we submit to the tyranny of the measuring instrument, and somehow in the final analysis, we 'miss the patterns' that tell us of the experience itself.

We actually know very little about the shape and the dynamics sustaining the ethnic matrix in American society. It is hoped that this suggested perspective on ethnicity as a dynamic, moving, constantly changing phenomenon will take us away from the fixed, rather concrete perceptions we have developed and have come to accept about ethnicity in the social sciences. It is also hoped that researchers will attach greater significance to the ethnographic qualitative type study, rather than relying solely on the correlational and quantitative approach. And, as

practitioners, we should study the warp and woof of the social fabric through careful observation and non-intrusive participation in the process itself.

TABLE 1

ETHNIC ORIENTATION MODEL



IPR: Island Puerto Rican- This end of the continuum represents the archetypical Puerto Rican on the island. It is suggested that he/she would possess those characteristic "Puerto Rican" traits which allow us to use this polarity as a convenient abstraction or ideal type as put forth by Max Weber, the German sociologist. This does not represent a real person. It simply provides us with a model for discussion.

MPR: Mainland Puerto Rican- This end of the continuum represents the Puerto Rican in the United States, possessing those traits more typically characteristic of a particular American culture or subculture.

The directional arrows on the continuum represent the dynamic aspects or quality of movement associated with issues or variables which play an active role in influencing ethnic identity. Generally, these issues or events can also be referred to as "life choices." This model may also be tested against ethnic choices and movements of other ethnic groups, as well. It should be noted that the X coordinate could also be visualized as being intersected by a Y coordinate which represents a time line.

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